



INDONESIA: ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE, HEALTH & TECHNOLOGY HIGHLIGHTS MARCH - JUNE 2006

Summary

- President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) called for thorough fire prevention planning on June 17 to stop smoke haze export to neighboring countries.
- On June 27, State Minister of Environment Rachmat Witoelar released a 2005 "State of the Environment Report" listing 65 environmental watershed areas in critical condition and noting serious deforestation problems across Indonesia.
- A Chinese company announced plans on April 18 to establish a timber processing factory in Papua to supply the hardwood merbau to Olympic venues in Beijing, but the Beijing Olympic Organizing Committee announced on May 31 that none of the 24 Olympic venues "is using or will use virgin timber from Indonesia."
- Minister of Forestry M.S. Kaban stated on April 9 that the Government of Indonesia (GOI) has increased the number of national parks from 30 to 55, but it is unclear whether the GOI has budgeted for a corresponding increase in funding for park management and conservation.
- On June 19, the head of the Jakarta Sanitation Office said the city government would allocate Rp 10 billion (USD 1.1 million) of 2006 funds to develop a new program for coastal waste management.
- On June 2, the Government of Indonesia (GOI) announced an early termination of cooperation with the Gibbon Foundation in the development and management of animal protection centers in Indonesia.
- Experts warned on April 30 that illegal wildlife trade threatens a number of animal species on the island of Sulawesi.
- The GOI announced new Chairmen for the National Agency for Food and Drug Control (BPOM) on May 17 and the Agency for the Assessment and Application of Technology (BPPT) on April 26.

Summary (continue)

- On May 15, Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Purnomo Yusgiantoro confirmed that the Indonesian Government remains committed to building a 1,000 Megawatt (MW) nuclear power plant in Muria Peninsula, Central Java.
- An international team of experts provided seismology and tsunami warning training to 40 representatives of GOI agencies, non-government organizations, and universities from May 8-17 in Jakarta.
- On March 23, Indonesian researchers warned that continuing leaded gasoline use may be causing high lead levels in the blood of Indonesia's children

ENVIRONMENT

Commitment to Stop Haze Export

On June 17, President Yudhoyono instructed governors, regents, and heads of related regional institutions to take “concrete actions” to prevent forest and land fires to stop smoke haze export to neighboring countries. The President made his remarks at a national conference for fire prevention in Palembang, South Sumatra attended by approximately 2,500 fire brigade teams from 28 provinces. The Ministry of Forestry identified seven provinces with palm oil and industrial plantations that are particularly susceptible to fire outbreaks because farmers still use traditional methods of land clearing. The seven include Riau, North Sumatra, South Sumatra, Jambi, East Kalimantan, West Kalimantan, and Bengkulu provinces. Experts told conference participants that National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) satellite data from 2005 reveal that 30 percent of haze originates from forested areas while 70 percent originates from nonforested areas such as plantations, small farms, and idle land.

Environmental Report 2005 Notes Serious Degradation

On June 27, State Minister of Environment Rachmat Witoelar told a Jakarta audience that Indonesia faces serious forest and environmental degradation that is leading to environmental disasters. Witoelar made his remarks as part of the release of a 295-page “State of the Environment Report 2005” for Indonesia. The report lists 65 environmental watershed areas in critical condition, up from the 22 listed in 1992. It notes serious deforestation problems and underscores the government’s inability to enforce fully the

1997 Environmental Law. The report also documents a decrease in air quality in major cities in 2005, with only 29 clean-air days in Jakarta, 21 in Surabaya and 24 in Medan. Thirty rivers were listed as being highly contaminated with chemical pollutants and bacterial agents, including human waste.

Chinese Interest in Indonesian Timber

On April 18, Minister of Forestry M.S. Kaban announced to the press that the Chinese firm China Light Industry is contemplating a USD 1 billion investment to establish a timber processing factory in Papua. Kaban said the company is interested in making this investment to meet China's need for 800,000 cubic meters of merbau timber to construct sport facilities for the 2008 Olympics. Merbau (botanical name: *Intsia spp*) is a hardwood native to Papua and Papua New Guinea used primarily for flooring. In addition, China Light Industry has said it is also interested in building a pulp and paper factory in Papua. However, Kaban said that the Ministry of Forestry would only permit processed timber to be exported at this time, ruling out log exports. As of July 2007, the status of the project is uncertain given a May 31 announcement by the Beijing Olympic Organizing Committee that none of the 24 Olympic venues "is using or will use virgin timber from Indonesia."

Indonesia National Parks Areas Increased

Kaban also announced on April 9 that the GOI has increased the number of national parks from 30 to 55. He added that this effort indicates the GOI's high level of commitment to conserving and protecting Indonesia's natural resources. However, it is unclear whether the GOI has budgeted for an increase in funding for park management and conservation for an expanded national park system. According to the Ministry, Indonesia has 120.35 million hectares of forest, of which 59 million hectares are in critical condition and in need of rehabilitation.

Jakarta Money for Coastal Waste Management

On June 19, the head of the Jakarta city Sanitation Office said the city government would allocate Rp 10 billion (USD 1.1 million) of 2006 budget funds to develop a new program for coastal waste management. The Jakarta city government is seeking to develop an integrated coastal management solution to clean up Jakarta Bay in cooperation with the West Java and Banten provincial governments and the central government. As part of this effort, the Jakarta city government has said it will likely create a special authority to manage coastal wastes. The waste volume entering Jakarta Bay now reaches 300 cubic meters a day of mostly plastic and industrial waste from Jakarta, West Java, and Banten Provinces, according to environmental observers.

Currently, the Jakarta Sanitation Office uses six boats to net coastal waste with the capacity of collecting 220 cubic meters of waste per day.

GOI Cooperation with Gibbon Foundation Terminated

The MOF announced in a June 2 press release that the Ministry's Directorate General for Forest Protection and Nature Conservation (PHKA) had ceased cooperation with the Gibbon Foundation in the development of "animal protection centers" since April 2006. The PHKA said it terminated the cooperation agreement early due to unspecified "disagreements and distrust" between the two parties. The PHKA had been cooperating with the foundation since 2002, with the agreement scheduled to continue through 2007.

Under its agreement with the PHKA, the Gibbon Foundation developed and managed animal protection centers to implement the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) resolution. Since 2002, the Foundation had helped establish seven animal protection centers in Tegal Alur (Jakarta), Gadog and Cikananga (West Java), Yogyakarta, Patung Sewu (East Java), Bali and Tasekoki (North Sulawesi).

With the early termination, the Ministry banned the Gibbon Foundation from conducting conservation activities and managing the centers. The termination of cooperation between the PHKA and the Foundation will likely require the Ministry to consolidate some centers, assume the operational costs for all centers and identify foreign donors.

Sulawesi Species Threatened

Growing illegal wildlife trade is threatening a number of birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians in Sulawesi with extinction, according to a World Conservation Union (WCU) report released on April 30. The Program Coordinator of the Sulawesi Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) said wildlife trade in many rare animals flourishes in traditional markets and is evidence of the region's lack of appreciation for natural wildlife. For example, according to the WCU, the rare crested black macaque (*macaca nigra*), is traded in local markets. Seven of 11 world macaque species are from Sulawesi.

According to WCU estimates, the *Macaca nigra* population plummeted from 500 per square kilometer in 1999 to 49 per square kilometer in 2003. The WCU report notes Sulawesi has 127 species of mammals (79 indigenous species), 233 species of birds (103 indigenous species), and 104 species of reptiles (29 indigenous species).

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

New Faces at BPOM and BPPT

On May 17, Minister of Health Dr. Siti Fadilah Supari inaugurated Dr. Husniah Rubiana Thamrin Akib as the new Chairman of National Agency for Drug and Food Control (BPOM), replacing Dr. Sampurno. The BPOM performs food and drug safety functions equivalent to those of the U.S. Federal Drug Administration. Previously, Dr. Husniah served as the Director of Rational Drug Use Development in the Ministry of Health's Directorate General of Pharmaceutical and Medical Equipment Development. She received her medical degree from the University of Indonesia.

Minister of Research and Technology Kusmayanto Kadiman inaugurated Professor Dr. Said Djauharsyah Jenie as the new Chairman of the Agency of Assessment and Application of Technology (BPPT) on April 26. The BPPT formulates national technology development policy and recommends technological applications for GOI ministries and government-linked bodies. Dr. Jenie is from Solo, Central Java and received a doctoral degree in aerodynamics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Previously, he served as the Deputy Chairman of BPPT for Manufacturing and Design Technology. Jenie's twin brother, Prof. Umar A. Jenie, is the Chairman of the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI).

Planning for A Nuclear Power Plant

On May 15, Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Purnomo Yusgiantoro confirmed that the Indonesian Government remains committed to building a 1,000 Megawatt (MW) nuclear power plant in Muria Peninsula, Central Java. According to press reports, the GOI plans to conduct a tender in 2008 and begin construction in 2009 with operations targeted to start in 2015-2016. Project costs for a 1,000 MW nuclear power plant could reach Rp 9 trillion (USD 1 billion), according to Purnomo. The nuclear power plant is part of the GOI's target to add 4,000 MW of electric power in the North Java coastal areas by 2016.

Seismology and Tsunami Training

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Geological Survey, UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), and the Indonesian Meteorological and Geophysical Agency (BMG) conducted joint training on seismology and tsunami warning on May 18 in Jakarta to 40 representatives of GOI agencies, non-government organizations and universities. The training aimed to provide the necessary skills and tools for using seismic data in identifying tsunami events and providing better life-saving information to the public. The training is part of a regional

USD 16.6 million program managed by USAID to support the IOC and individual countries affected by the 2004 tsunami. The program shares technical capability and experience in detecting earthquakes, tsunamis, and related hazards.

HEALTH

Leaded Gasoline Puts Children at Health Risk

Sixty-six percent of school-aged children in Bandung have a lead content in their blood above 13.13 micrograms per deciliter, according to a research report released on March 23 by Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB), the Lead Center (KPBB), and Hijau Lestari Foundation. Researchers also found children in Makassar with high lead blood content, including some with counts of 23.96 grams per deciliter. The World Health Organization standard is 10 micrograms per deciliter. Researchers tested the lead content in the blood of school children in Makassar, South Sulawesi and Bandung, West Java. The researchers concluded that the high lead content in the children's blood is due to the ongoing use of leaded fuel in those cities. Currently, unleaded gasoline is only available in four provinces: Jakarta and surrounding cities, Cirebon, Bali and Batam. However, even in these areas, the vast majority of gasoline consumed contains lead.